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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 16 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit herewith the Harare Declaration on Solar Energy and Sustainable Development and the World Solar Programme 1996-2005: An Outline, which were adopted by heads of State and Government on the occasion of the World Solar Summit held at Harare on 16 and 17 September 1996.

I wish to request that this letter and its two annexes be circulated as documents of the General Assembly under the above agenda item.

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Annex I

HARARE DECLARATION ON SOLAR ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We, the heads of State and Government, gathered or officially represented in Harare on the occasion of the World Solar Summit, following the invitation by the Government of Zimbabwe and at the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in collaboration with international organizations and institutions, in order to launch a programme for global solar activities to be known as the World Solar Programme 1996-2005:

1. Recognize the significance of the role that solar and other sources of renewable energy, such as wind, geothermal, hydro, biomass and ocean energy, as well as energy efficiency, should play in the provision of energy services and in the sustainable use of environmental resources for the well-being of humanity;

2. Reiterate our support for the principles and actions for the promotion of energy systems for sustainable development recommended by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held from 3 to 14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, in particular the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and Agenda 21, as well as the commitments made in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

3. Recognize that the provision of sufficient energy services at affordable prices and the adoption of energy conservation measures are essential for the progress of all countries, developed and developing alike, to meet current and expanding needs in ways that minimize environmental degradation and risks, as well as to realize the full potential of renewable energy sources;

4. Recognize that there is a need to increase substantially access to energy in developing countries, and that the provision of adequate energy services can improve living conditions, alleviate poverty, improve health and education, promote small-scale enterprises and create other income-generating activities, especially in rural and isolated areas, thereby reducing rural to urban migration;

5. Recognize that the role of solar energy in each country needs to be integrated and specified in its national energy policy;

6. Recognize that the development, deployment and widespread utilization of solar energy face difficulties, particularly with regard to their management, maintenance and financing as well as to the availability and accessibility of relevant data, information, education, training and technology;

7. Recognize that increased use of solar energy can reduce environmental degradation caused by adverse human activities, such as industrial pollution and deforestation, and that it is the responsibility of Governments and all sectors of civil society to work together to find lasting solutions to problems threatening the sustainable development of humanity;

8. Emphasize that the management of atmospheric emissions of greenhouse and other gases and substances will increasingly require efficient and environmentally sound energy systems, including solar energy systems;

9. Recognize the important role that relevant non-governmental organizations play in the development and deployment of solar energy;

10. Recognize that women have an important role to play in the promotion of solar energy, and that they would benefit significantly from its use;

11. Are convinced that sustainable development and the utilization of solar energy would be enhanced by local and national capacity-building, policy reform and technology-sharing among nations, with an emphasis on coherent efforts towards technology acquisition and development in the developing countries.

We therefore:

12. Commit ourselves to working towards the wider use of solar energy to enhance the economic and social development of all people. The support and promotion of these efforts should be very important goals of our Governments, the international community and all sectors of society, especially with respect to people living in isolated and underdeveloped rural and island communities;

13. Commit ourselves to working towards policies and effective mechanisms that will speed up and facilitate the use of solar energy, avoiding duplication and administrative delays, and the encouragement of international cooperation, including participation in regional and international bodies, scientific and technical organizations;

14. Commit ourselves to working towards the greater use of solar energy through the provision of adequate technical assistance and funding, the full utilization of existing international funds, and the facilitation of increased participation by both public and private sectors.

In pursuit of these objectives, we:

15. Call on all nations to join in the development and implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005;

16. Invite the World Solar Commission to continue to provide high-level political leadership and guidance to achieve the objectives of the Summit and invite the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to continue to play a leading role in the development of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, in close cooperation with relevant international organizations;

17. Invite the Secretary-General and head of specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations, as well as national Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions and the private sector, to join in the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.

Annex II

WORLD SOLAR PROGRAMME 1996-2005: AN OUTLINE

1. Introduction

This outline of the proposed World Solar Programme 1996-2005, to be launched at the World Solar Summit on 16 and 17 September 1996 in Harare, is an attempt to briefly state the most salient features of the Programme and its determining activity, the World Solar Summit Process.

The World Solar Programme is an open-ended attempt through broad partnership and cooperation of Governments and organizations to promote the adoption and wider utilization of renewable energy sources. This will be achieved through the setting of agreed targets, appropriate standards, cooperation mechanisms, incentives and pooling of resources. The major benefits to be derived from the Programme include the enhancement of the quality of life of large numbers of people, particularly in the rural areas, and the creation of additional employment through the development of new enterprises. The Programme is a response to the challenge posed by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which requires all countries to institute appropriate measures for reducing pollution by introducing clean technology; hence, the Programme will set us off on the "solar highway" leading to sustainable development.

The World Solar Programme will evolve over the decade 1996-2005 through the development and implementation of high-priority national, regional and global projects, under the leadership and guidance of the World Solar Commission.

2. Background

Rapid political, social and economic changes are taking place everywhere, bringing both hope and despair to individuals in different parts of the world. As far as energy is concerned, the world today seems to have been polarized. The 75 per cent of humanity living in the developing countries account for only 25 per cent of global energy consumption. More than one billion people in the developing countries have no source of energy available to them other than the traditional ones (fuelwood and other forms of biomass). More than two billion people in these countries have no access to electricity. It was in its endeavour to take up the challenge of providing these people with their basic minimum energy needs that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in a broad-based partnership with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, international organizations and concerned governmental and non-governmental organizations, launched in 1993 a global initiative: a three-year-long communication process known as the World Solar Summit Process. The objectives of the Process were to enhance the global understanding of the role that renewable energies can play in providing clean energies to billions of people in far and remote areas of the developing countries of the world; create new employment opportunities; improve health services; contribute to the preservation of the environment; and develop and

reinforce the spirit of international cooperation through interregional communication and exchange of expertise and technologies. The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 is envisaged as an instrument for attaining the objectives of the World Solar Summit Process.

3. The Programme and its nature

The World Solar Programme finds it roots in the high-level regional consultations that have been undertaken throughout the world during the last three years. The Programme is conceived as a necessary global commitment and a major coordinated effort of the various national and international actors to develop and implement more than 300 top-priority renewable energy projects of national, regional and international value within a 10-year period in order to demonstrate the technical feasibility, economic viability and social and political acceptability of solar energy. This Programme should be seen as a challenging joint effort involving Governments, major international organizations and funding institutions, non-governmental organizations, industries, scientific and research institutions, universities etc. to promote the development and deployment of renewable energy.

4. The aims and objectives of the Programme

The aims and objectives of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 are to:

- Enhance the understanding of the role that renewable energy sources can play in the preservation of the environment; the provision of energy services, particularly for rural and remote areas; the creation of employment and improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the rural people, particularly of women in the developing countries of the world; and the fostering of increased energy independence;

- Develop a favourable political, social and economic climate in favour of renewable energies by demonstrating the economic viability and social acceptability of such projects;

- Promote and harmonize cooperation in education, training and research, as well as in the transfer of research disclosures to industry at the regional, interregional and international levels;

- Strengthen the commitment from the international community, especially multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as the national commitment from each country;

- Reinforce local technological and entrepreneurial capacity-building and encourage the creation of small-scale financing and delivery mechanisms.

5. Scope of the Programme

The Programme includes projects of varying degrees of geographical limits and accruing values. Some projects have been identified by various national Governments themselves as being of the highest priority. Such projects, known as the high-priority national projects, will not only be of benefit to the concerned countries but will also provide valuable information to other countries.

Other projects of regional value have been identified during the various regional consultations that took place in different parts of the world during the last three years. These projects have been termed high-priority regional projects, the benefits of which will accrue to the entire region.

Finally, there are global projects of universal value, identified and endorsed during regional ministerial-level and high-level expert meetings, as well as during the meetings of the regional solar councils, organized since 1993 within the framework of the World Solar Summit Process. A short summary of each of these projects is presented hereunder:

- Rural electrification: in the rural and/or remote areas of the world, more than 400 million households do not have access to electricity;

- Global education and training programme: its objective is to effectively disseminate information and provide appropriate training for engineers, technicians and users of solar energy technology, as well as decision makers, businessmen and industrialists;

- Water desalination and purification: the objective of this project is to initiate the implementation of a world water desalination programme designed to establish new ways of supplying drinkable water to rural areas, using renewable energies;

- Information and communication: the objectives are to provide the necessary information to both the decision maker and the public at large in order to sensitize them on the potential of renewable energies, and to provide professional know-how and expertise-sharing in the area of renewable energy technologies and systems;

- Industrial policy, market penetration and technology transfer: the aims are to establish regulations for the integration of renewable energies in common planning procedures and project development; to establish new information channels to disseminate the appropriate technologies to target groups of professionals and marketers; to set up mechanisms to facilitate North-South and South-South technology-sharing initiatives at the regional and local levels; and to support the market with strong research and development efforts to investigate innovative concepts and stimulate the take-up of new technologies in the market based on the feedback from the market's end-users.

6. Strategy to achieve the Programme's objectives

The World Solar Programme envisages the accomplishment of its objectives by mobilizing a concerted global effort, with the continued cooperation and commitment of various Governments, international organizations, bilateral and multilateral funding institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, research organizations and universities, etc. Since the Programme aims to implement the high-priority projects of national and regional importance submitted by various Governments, it attaches a strategic importance to continued intergovernmental and intra-governmental support and to the mobilization of the private sector.

7. Funding for the Programme

Various regional consultations on this issue have revealed that in some countries today, budgetary provision already exists for research, education, training and development in the area of renewable energies. However, it has become increasingly evident that the funding windows for the development of renewable energies from government and private sources as well as financial and developmental institutions should be augmented. Furthermore, innovative new financing opportunities, including microfinancing and the need to attract private capital to supplement insufficient public resources, should be created. It is expected that national Governments, as well as international and regional development and finance banks, will accord high priority to financing renewable energy projects identified in the Programme.

8. Methodology for the implementation of the Programme

The detailed methodology for the implementation of the Programme will be finalized after it is formally launched at the World Solar Summit. Under the overall guidance of the World Solar Commission, the Programme will be given a definite structure within a period of nine months after the Summit through intensive deliberations and appropriate negotiations, it being understood that the Programme is open-ended, i.e., that new projects can be included during the decade that it will cover.

The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 will be implemented having recourse as much as possible to partnership arrangements and using existing structures extensively. At the international level, the various organizations and institutions concerned should be responsible for the execution of projects within their respective spheres of competence. The same will be true at the regional level, where the regional solar councils created at the regional preparatory meetings for the World Solar Summit Process should play a coordinating and monitoring role.

While UNESCO is prepared to continue to furnish the secretariat of the World Solar Commission, a substantial increase in the participation of all main actors at the international intergovernmental level will be necessary to ensure the successful completion and implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.